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PROPOSAL

FOR EMPLOYING

MALLAYAN OR BUGGESS TROOPS,

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In the EAST-INDIA COMPANY's Settlements in INDOSTAN.

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MALLAYAN or BUGGESS TROOPS in INDOSTAN.

HOWEVER ſerviceable the Seapoys may have been in thoſe parts in our late wars, it will be allowed, upon reflection, that it is a dangerous meaſure to place our chief dependance upon the very inhabitants of the country we mean to keep in ſubjection.

The numbers we muſt neceſſarily keep in pay *, and the continual ſucceſſion which muſt happen from the nature of their engagements, being for a ſhort period, muſt in time diffuſe a military ſpirit, and general knowledge of diſcipline, through the country. This ſpirit may prove dangerous to the Company's intereſt; nor will there be

* There are 50,000 of them at preſent at Bengal, and upon the coaſt of Coromandel.

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wanting amongſt the natives men of ſuperior genius, to take advantage of thoſe circumſtances to raiſe diſturbances and revolts. Iſof-Cawn and Hydra-Nag have made us ſeverely feel the poſſibility of this.

Beſides, in a commercial light, nothing can be more imprudent than, by ideas of war and military honour, to turn the inhabitants from trade and manufactures, by which the trade of the country is chiefly ſupported. Men, once accuſtomed to the idleneſs and diſſipation of a camp, will not eaſily return to induſtry and application.

To remedy as far as poſſible theſe inconveniencies, it is propoſed always to entertain a body of Mallayan troops, or Buggeſſes, in Indoſtan, at the different ſettlements.

The Mallays are thoſe people who inhabit the peninſula of Mallayo, and the iſlands on the eaſt ſide of the bay of Bengal, viz. Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and Celebes; (the Buggeſſes are properly the inhabitants of the iſland Celebes): and the Mallay language, the eaſieſt and ſofteſt in the world, is ſpoke from Atchin-head to Ceram, 1000 leagues eaſt of it. In the ſame iſlands, there is a different race of men in the interior parts of the country, with whom we have little intercourſe, and are not meant to be included in this account of the Mallays.

The Mallays in general are a hardy ſtrong built people, not near ſuch a feeble race as the Indoſtanners, and capable of ſuffering much more fatigue. I have frequently ſailed in India with a crew of both, and always found the Mallay, or Buggeſs, capable of working harder, and not near ſo ſubject to catch cold in bad weather, as the Indoſtanner. He is alſo much leſs nice in the choice of his ſubſiſtence. If an Indoſtanner has not rice regularly, he cannot ſubſiſt; but a Mallay or Buggeſs, when in the field, will find many fruits, roots, and herbs, on which he will make a good repaſt, if he can but have ſalt, and convenience for cooking them.

They are clean-limbed and light of foot, are patient under hardſhips, and have great command of temper, and are therefore capable of diſcipline and ſubordination to a great degree.

As the continent of Indoſtan is far from their own country, and the inhabitants there quite a different ſet of people from them, the Mallays, if well uſed, would never leave white people whom they knew, to deſert to black people whom they could not truſt; neither could any reſtleſs ſpirit amongſt them be ever tempted by ambition, to think of making himſelf independent in a country

a country where he is a ſtranger, both as to language and manners.

If therefore a number of thoſe people, as many as can be procured, were to be introduced into Indoſtan, properly diſciplined and regimented, with European officers, they could not fail of being of great ſervice to the company. The Dutch had them in Bengal in 1759, and have employed them with ſucceſs in their more recent wars at Ceylon. The Portugueſe likewiſe made uſe of them in their wars at Goa in former days.

The difference of climate can be no objection to the introduction of Mallay troops into Indoſtan. They muſt neceſſarily be as healthy as the natives; becauſe, in their own country, being inured to a hot and moiſt air all the year round, they muſt be better fitted to endure that which prevails in India in the ſickly ſeaſon. Perhaps it is not even impoſſible to make Mallay troops keep the field in Monſoon time, to harraſs the enemy, when the Seapoys are obliged to go into cantonments, which would give us a prodigious advantage in our wars in thoſe parts.

It is not here propoſed, nor indeed is it practicable, to ſupply our armies with Mallays entirely; but the reaſons which have been aſſigned, will ſhow the advantages of

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ſuch a meaſure, as far as it can be carried into execution: and at any rate, ſuppoſing no advantage in them over other black troops, yet ſound policy ſhould lead us to have always a body of them as a check upon the Seapoys and natives of the country.

I come now to ſpeak of the moſt practicable way of getting Mallay recruits into Indoſtan. Let letters be ſent to the kings of Atchin, Salingore, and Queda, to acquaint them, that ſuch a number of Mallay troops were wanted at Madraſs, and to aſk their permiſſion to levy them in their dominions.

The above-named princes have a high idea of our ſtrength and conſequence in India, and I am perſuaded would gladly liſten to any requeſt of that kind, eſpecially if attended with a ſmall advantage to themſelves: And in thoſe countries, as there are no manufactures, conſequently there may be ſuppoſed many idle people; and this I have found really to be the caſe in the Mallay villages, where the men generally ſaunter about the market-place, whilſt the women work even in the rice-fields.

I have always found Mallays fond of a military life, becauſe it is generally an idle life; and as they have all a great opinion of

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the healthiness of the coaſt of Coromandel, I am confident volunteers enough would offer themſelves; more eſpecially as the paſſage is certain, and but of ten days continuance in the month of January; for then the wind is fixed in the north-eaſt quarter. The paſſage from Madraſs is equally as ſhort, which would not only be of utility to our tranſports, but afford the means of a regular correſpondence with thoſe who are abſent from their wives and families: And ſuch is the regard of a Mallay for his family, that he would yearly ſend over to them part of his pay, and think himſelf very happy in our ſervice in ſuch a fine climate as India, where he could live ſo well himſelf, and have ſomething to ſpare to ſend home to his family.

I would propoſe, that thoſe who inliſted ſhould engage for four years; and ſuch as choſe it, ſhould be regularly ſent back at the expiration of that time: This would create in them a confidence in us, and greatly diſpoſe others to inliſt. The recruits ſhould all rendezvous at Queda in the month of January; from whence, the expence of tranſporting them to Madraſs would not be above five dollars a-head; and allowing fifteen dollars inliſting-money, and four dollars agency to the King of Queda,

Queda, the whole would be about twenty-four dollars, or 5 l. 8 s.

I have not the leaſt doubt, if meaſures were rightly taken in purſuance of this plan, but that the Eaſt-India Company might engage, and always keep up, a body of at leaſt 5000 Mallays; which, with the Europeans in their ſervice, would form a complete check upon any number of the natives of the country which they choſe to employ. I ſhall only add, that a very conſiderable ſaving will be made to ſuch as employ theſe troops, the expence of ſending ſoldiers from Europe being from 30 to 40 l. Sterling per man, beſides draining our mother-country of uſeful hands *.

Edinburgh, Jan. 16. 1769.

* Bencoolen originally was garriſoned with Buggeſſes, but, when the French attacked it in 1760, of 400 country troops there was not ten Buggeſſes; the reſt were Mallays, moſtly natives of the place. The obvious conſequence happened; they would not fight, but fell a plundering as ſoon as the place was attacked. Since then, Seapoys have been ſent from Madraſs to garriſon Bencoolen; but they died off faſt. A ſmall remainder of them were ſent back to Madraſs in the year 1766.